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**better
eating
for**

**BETTER
HEALTH**

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17193



1898



1922

AGRICULTURE

WE'RE HEALTHIER . . .

Have you ever seen scurvy . . . rickets . . . pellagra? Probably not. These diseases, caused by poor nutrition, are rare in this country today; when they occur it's mostly from neglect.

Here in the U.S. an entire population—one of the first in human history—is free from the risks of severe hunger and deficiency diseases.

American agriculture deserves much of the credit for the "better eating" that's a big reason for our better health. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the land-grant colleges and universities are as concerned about how food is used as about how it is grown.

Scientists in agriculture have directly improved health and helped cure some diseases in man. Nutritional diseases—goiter, rickets, anemia, pellagra, beriberi, scurvy, and night blindness—were common a few decades ago. (As recently as 1928, more than 7,000 Americans died of pellagra.) Now we know that foods with the needed iodine, iron, or vitamins can prevent these diseases.

WE'RE EATING BETTER

Plants and animals are better now. This has paid off in human health.

Agricultural scientists found that similar foods may not always give the same nutrients to the people who eat them. They showed farmers that certain breeds of cattle give milk with higher protein content, that chickens fed special rations can lay eggs with more of vitamins A and D, that some strains of sweet potatoes, for instance, have more natural vitamin C than others.

Today farmers are growing "higher class" crops of plants and livestock, often bred especially so that our foods have more nutritional value. We're getting more dividends in health from the food we eat.

TODAY

LIVING LONGER . . .

Back in 1900 our life expectancy was only about 47 years. Today it's around 70! But in many countries where malnutrition and disease take heavy tolls, the people even now can expect only 35 to 45 years of life.

The striking decline in infant deaths—a drop from 162.4 per 1,000 in 1900 to about 25 per 1,000 in 1961—is one of our greatest accomplishments. Better nutrition for mothers, plus good medical care, has played an important role.

Now, nutritionists are concentrating on the special diet problems of our "over 65" age group.

These vital statistics tell a story of dramatic improvement in human health. Our nutrition is good and improving, or such spectacular gains in health and life would not have been possible.

GROWING STURDIER AND TALLER . . .

Better diets are one big reason (along with higher incomes and better medical care) that our children are growing taller and sturdier than we or their grandparents were at the same age.

The good nutrition that brings better health also helps a child reach the full body build that his inherited genes allow him. A 9-year-old boy today averages an inch or more taller than one a generation ago.

Young men and women are now about 2 inches taller than those the same age 60 years ago. Men now average around 5'-10", compared with 5'-8" for men at the beginning of the century. Their weight has increased, too, an average of 20 pounds.

Young adult women averaged 5'-4.3" in height in 1955, compared to 5'-2.4" in 1900. But the ladies are watching their weight. At the same ages, they weigh less for their height than their grandmothers did . . . by some 6 to 8 pounds.

THE REST IS UP TO US . . .

American farmers are producing some of the best food in the world today. How we select from this abundance is up to us, but most people now know quite a bit about what they should eat and why.

As a nation, our main nutritional fault now is that we're inclined to enjoy too many calories!



Cooperative Extension Work: United States Department of Agriculture and State Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Cooperating.

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